

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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~~EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Huang Hua
Mrs. Shih, Interpreter

Mr. Richard T. Kennedy, NSC Staff

DATE AND TIME: Monday, August 28, 1972, 5:00-5:30 p.m.

PLACE: New York

After a brief exchange of pleasantries, Mr. Kennedy noted that he had both a written message and an oral message to convey. He then read the written message at Tab A. He then indicated that the US side would be receiving a further report on this incident by August 29, 1972, and would communicate it to the Chinese side. Ambassador Hua asked if all that had been read was contained in the note which Mr. Kennedy handed to him to which Mr. Kennedy replied affirmatively. The Ambassador indicated that he would transmit the message to his government. He invited Mr. Kennedy then to make the oral statement.

Mr. Kennedy then read the oral statement at Tab B. The Ambassador said that he would transmit the oral message to the Prime Minister. He then made the following statement speaking without notes:

We transmitted through this channel the PRC position on this incident. It is as stated in our message. The lifeboat belonged to the Chinese; it did not carry cargo; and it was flying the flag of the PRC. This position was clearly stated in the message given to the US side in the statement of the Foreign Minister and the speech made by the spokesman of the Ministry of Information.

We hope that the US side will be dealing seriously with this matter and that it will secure against recurrences of similar incidents. The Chinese Government reserves the right to request compensation for losses.

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-2-

I hope that you will let us know of your final report of the investigations. As was stated in our message the last time, the Chinese side has made repeated representations to the US side but still incidents recur. That is why the Chinese side could not but make public the facts of this incident. The US side has made many representations as to guarantees of steps to assure against such incidents but still incidents have recurred. The Chinese Government therefore could not but protest to the US side. The statement by the US Command in Saigon was totally in denial of this incident. In short, the message, the statement of the Foreign Minister and the speech of the Government's spokesman have made the Chinese side's position very clear. We will not dwell on it further here. I hope the US side will investigate the incident seriously. I will transmit the messages you have given me to our government.

Mr. Kennedy assured the Ambassador that as the note indicated, the US side takes these matters and representations of the Chinese side concerning them very seriously indeed and investigates them very thoroughly. He stated that the Ambassador's statement would be conveyed to Dr. Kissinger. The Ambassador expressed appreciation and said that he would await the further report but that meanwhile the written and oral messages which Mr. Kennedy had given him would be transmitted.

Following closing pleasantries, the Ambassador indicated that he would look forward to receiving the further report of the incident and expressed appreciation for Mr. Kennedy's bringing the messages to him.

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The U.S. side has carefully studied the Chinese message of August 25, 1972.

With respect to the comments concerning representations by the Chinese side through this channel, the U.S. side would like to point out once again the seriousness with which it has treated every Chinese message. The U.S. side has appreciated the use of the private channel for this type of information. It is, of course, up to the Chinese side to decide when to publicize these matters and to what extent public controversy between the U.S. and the PRC is desirable.

The U.S. has meticulously investigated every incident that has been brought to its attention and reported the results of its investigations to the Chinese side. Despite the fact that these results often have not corresponded to the allegations, the U.S. side has consistently expressed regret for any inadvertent transgression or damage that may have occurred. In addition, the U.S. side has taken the strictest precaution to insure that border violations do not occur. The Chinese side has been informed of many concrete steps taken by the U.S. side to prevent incidents.

With regard to the August 22, 1972 incident, the U.S. side regrets the loss of life. It will continue to do everything possible to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. It must be pointed out once again, however, that events arising out of efforts in waters near North Vietnam to contravene the U.S. measures to prevent the supply of war materials are of a distinctly different nature than alleged violations of the Chinese border.

-2-

The U.S. side's initial investigation of the August 22, 1972 incident has produced the following report:

- No flag was observed.
- The craft was involved in the movement of cargo.
- Only after the above facts were established did the attack take place.

In light of the Chinese Foreign Ministry statement of August 27, 1972, the U.S. will make a new and detailed investigation of this matter and report any further information that may become available. The U.S. side wants the Chinese side to know that events such as described in the Chinese statements will not be permitted to occur.

The United States has been making maximum efforts to bring the Indochina war to an early conclusion on a basis just to all parties. No nation can have an interest in seeing the conflict prolonged and all can benefit from its rapid conclusion. For its part, the U.S. side will continue to do its utmost to reach a negotiated settlement in Paris in a constructive and generous spirit.

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ORAL MESSAGE

I have been asked to convey to you the following message for the Prime Minister in addition to our written note.

"There comes a time in international events when the long view must be taken. The United States side questions whether it is in the Chinese interest to see the Indochina conflict seriously complicate the position of the present United States Administration in light of all that it has done and is prepared to do in a global context. There are more fundamental considerations involved given this Administration's constant awareness of the dangers of modern imperialism.

"Accordingly, the United States side hopes that the Prime Minister would carefully consider the problem of Indochina in a broader framework. The United States will continue its earnest search for a rapid conclusion of the war on a just basis for all parties. It is clear at this point that other countries, too, have a responsibility to help speed the end of the conflict whose continuation only serves to distort the international situation."

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